PLANT FACT SHEET

Salvia officinalis L.

GENUS *Salvia* **FAMILY** Lamiaceae

COMMON NAMES Sage

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Herb, Spice, Leaves - tea, Flowers - tea

The leaves are used as a flavouring. They are often used to flavour meat. They are used in omelettes, vegetables, salads, sauces and soups. They are also pickled. They are also used to flavour cheese.
Young leaves and flowers are eaten raw or boiled, pickled or in sandwiches.
The fresh or dried leaves are used for tea.
Sage extract and oil are used to flavour ice cream, candy and baked goods.
CAUTION: It could be poisonous in large amounts due to thujone a nerve toxin.

DESCRIPTION

A low shrub up to 60-75 cm high and spreading 60-90 cm wide. It keeps growing from year to year. The stems are woody. The stems are wiry and green or purple. It can have fine white hairs. The leaves can be up to 12 cm long and 12 mm wide and are grey green and hairy. The leaves have a wrinkled surface and irregular edges along the side of the leaf. The flowers have purple lips. The nutlets are dark brown and about 2.5 mm across. There are many varieties of sage.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in the tropical highlands and up to 2600 m altitude. It does best in alkaline or lime rich soils. In Argentina it grows below 500 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 5-10. In Hobart Botanical gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seeds, cuttings or division of an established plant. Plants become woody after a few years so should be replanted about each 3 years. Plants can be grown by layering where a long stem is bent down into the soil until roots have formed. It is then cut off and planted.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The leaves can be used whole or dried and crumbled.

NOTES

There are about 900 Salvia species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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